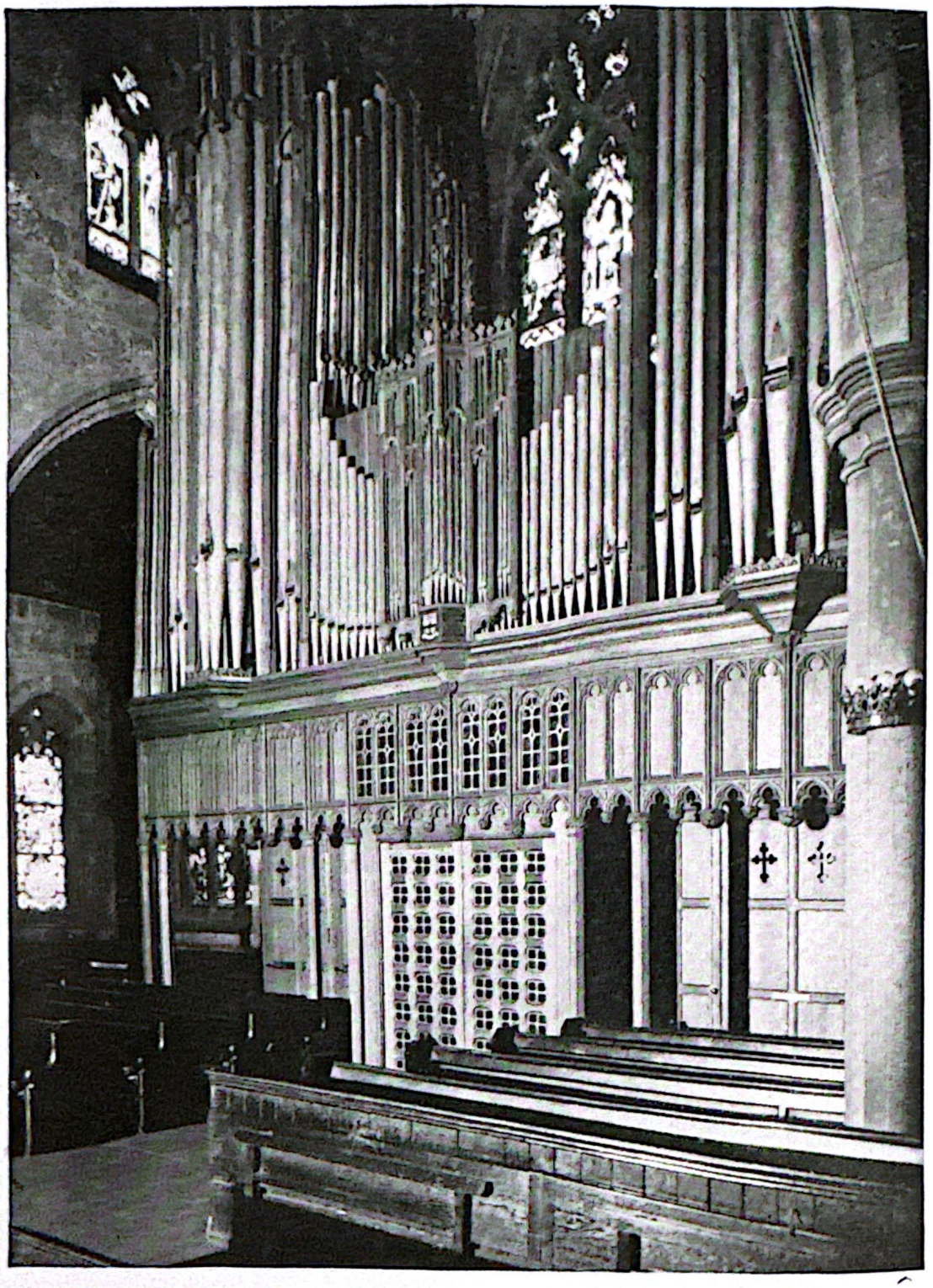
St. Mark's Church

Locust Street between 16th and 17th Streets

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Principles of Its Music



THE ORGAN

A Preface

In the belief that our readers will find greater pleasure and profit in reading Mr. Hawke's discussion in this issue if they know a little more about him and St. Mark's, we preface his article.

Mr. Hawke and Mr. Ernest White left their home in Canada and came to New York some seven years ago, youthful but exceedingly serious and high-idealed organists. They were then and still are like twin brothers. They went the complete round, visiting famous and unknown churches alike. They were out to learn. Mr. White specialized in concert playing of the Farnam style, and is one of Mr. Farnam's most brilliant pupils; Mr. Hawke turned his attention with equal zeal to becoming an expert in church music—high-church music.

"I came to New York," says Mr. Hawke, "seeking a definite field in church music, and strange to say, I found it in the little Church of St. Edward the Martyr." He had not been there two years when the opportunity for better work sought him and he went to St. Mark's in Philadelphia. Mr. White also migrated to Philadelphia, filling the vacancy caused by the death of the late S. Wesley Sears, in the justly noted St. James' Church.

The two men are carrying out the idea of mutual criticism often urged in these pages: "We strongly criticize each other, even to the point of warring on our differences. I go over my service lists with him, he gets me to listen to his organ pieces, and we do not spare each other in our remarks."

This March Mr. Hawke's boys of St. Mark's will sing in Mr. Stokowski's production of "Parsifal," a selection based not upon personalities but on the boys' tone and rhythm. The St. Mark's boys have had to be particular in all details of their work.

"We work out our services," says Mr. Hawke in a personal letter, "with the same regard for detail as the producer of a stage play. Our cues are taken up promptly, our meanings are driven home with proper inflections and phrasings. There is no feeling either of time wasted or of hurry; it is all synchronized.

"We know that if the choir procession leaves the choir-room ninety seconds before eleven o'clock, they will enter the church door at precisely eleven. I cannot see the choir enter, for I am in a side gallery and they come in around the corner, but I know they are there—thanks to an efficient assistant choirmaster.

"We can always tell the length of time it will take from the end of the sermon until the end of the Mass, depending upon the music used. We tell the master of ceremonies just how many verses we will sing in the Sequence hymn, so that he can start his Gospel procession at the proper time and reach the choir steps just as we finish. Of course none of this would be possible without Father

Vernon's active co-operation. He is such a rare rector. His taste is as good in music as it is in literature or any other art. Our services will be much better five years from today if we can keep on in this way."

The rector's name does not appear anywhere on the four-page leaflet of services of the week, but the name of the organist appears as a footnote to the service of evensong. Mr. Hawke is enabled to spend his entire time and energy in devotion to his church work alone; nothing else matters.

Let the reader approach Mr. Hawke's remarks as coming from one who is intensely occupied with the ideal of providing true church music for a truly churchly service in which it is never necessary to entertain the chairman of the music committee with Moonlight and Roses, nor the minister with the latest arrangement of the Sextette from Lucia. Music in St. Mark's is being permitted to approach the ideal; there is no interference. What a happy situation it is, and all too rare.

The organ was originally built by the Austin Organ Co. in 1902, with a String Organ added some years later from the Wanamaker organ shop. Dr. Audsley was called in consultation about adding a Diapason chorus, which was later accomplished to specifications of Senator Emerson L. Richards, the work being carried out by Midmer-Losh Inc. in 1926. In T.A.O. for April 1927 will be found full details of this extensive Diapason chorus addition—which includes a chorus on 3¾″ wind, a 5r Schulze Mixture on the same, and a high-pressure chorus on wind from 3¾″ to 12″, with most of it on 7½″. The instrument now contains about 115 ranks.

THE EDITOR

Music in the Episcopal Church

A Discussion of the Principles of Episcopal Music and Details of Their Application in St. Mark's, Philadelphia

By H. WILLIAM HAWKE, Mus.Bac.

THERE has been much discussion devoted to church music in different magazines on religious matters; we have heard about unified services, in which a central thought predominates, but we have overlooked the fact that all this was established many years ago, and that the Episcopal and Roman Catholic Churches have a definite teaching for each Sunday and feast in the year. It is our task to bring the music into line with this teaching matter, and the creation of suitable musical programs for each Sunday is a matter of understanding the teaching of the church.

The principal service in the Episcopal and Catholic Churches is the Mass, or Holy Communion, as it is popularly called in English. We have certain musical portions which are invariable (called the Ordinary), and which include the Kyrie Eleison, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei, Gloria in Excelsis. We have certain portions called the Proper, which include Introit, Gradual, Alleluia or Tract, Sequence, Offertory, Communion; and which also include the Collect, Epistle and Gospel, and the Preface. All other Offices of the Day would take their theme from the Propers of the Mass, especially from the Collect, Epistle and Gospel; there is always a definite teaching to be learned from these, it is always possible to select hymns to amplify the thoughts which they contain; it is always possible to select an anthem or motet which will correspond.

Canon 47 of the American Church tells us that it shall be the duty of every minister to appoint for use in his congregation hymns or anthems from those authorized by the rubric, and, with such assistance as he may see fit to employ from persons skilled in music, to give order concerning the tunes to be sung in his church. It shall be his especial duty to suppress all light and unseemly music, and all irreverence in the performance. It is not often that the choirmaster has the privilege of selecting the hymns, but he generally is given full liberty with regard to the anthems; it would be his privilege to select the hymns if rectors were aware that he understood the services of the church.

It requires time to select music for the church services; it requires that the Collect, Epistle and Gospel be read, that the Propers of the Mass be examined, and that a defi-

nite idea of the meaning of each service is established. There are many helps to which one may have reference, particularly the English Hymnal, which has a section on page 914, called Hymns Arranged for Sundays and Holy Days; also, the publication prepared and printed for the Joint Commission on Church Music, 1931, published by H. W. Gray Co.; although this latter cannot always be faithfully depended upon, as it too frequently compromises between Catholic and Protestant viewpoints, and the particular needs of each parish must be brought to bear upon it. We use the American Hymnal in our services at St. Mark's, Philadelphia, with additions from the English Hymnal and Songs of Syon, which are printed in full on the music list.

I know another choirmaster who approaches his Sunday lists in this manner, and his lists are models for any choirmaster, whatever his church. These music lists are kindly sent to me each week, and I keep them on file and constantly refer to them. These are the lists of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, of which Mr. Raymond Nold is music director. I obtain several music lists regularly, and find that others are making attempts to build services in this way, but can see that they are sometimes handicapped by having to consider the popularity of certain hymns, or by having the hymns selected by the rector, who often tries to make the services far too varied in sentiment.

Evensong is a daily Office, which happens to be sung on Sundays in most churches and said on weekdays; it is the same whether said or sung. The thought of the day is summarized in the Collect. It is a less variable service than the Mass, therefore on most Sundays an evening anthem is suitable; through a great part of the year (Trinity-tide) hymns to the Trinity and anthems of a general character are suitable, but there are other parts of the year when we should have the day firmly in mind when making selections; thus from Advent to Whitsunday, our repertoire must not be just so many anthems or motets, but anthems and motets suitable for each particular Sunday. There are many lists published which will help in making selections.

For illustration of the particular character of each Sunday, let us take the season of Advent. The season is generally penitential and expectant, but each of the four Sundays has its particular character; the first Sunday's Gospel stresses "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord"; the Collect asks that grace may be bestowed upon us so that we may cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armor of light. Isn't that a sufficient theme from which to select hymns and anthems?

The second Sunday brings us to think of the holy Scriptures, the Word of God and the Day of Judgment, also very clear thoughts.

The third Sunday asks that the ministers and stewards of Thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready Thy way. The central idea is the messenger preparing the way of Christ; the Propers make mention of the Shepherd of Israel, and this Sunday is popularly known as that of the Good Shepherd.

The fourth Sunday asks that the Lord raise up his power and come among us, and with great might succour us; the words of the Epistle "Rejoice in the Lord alway —the Lord is at hand" give us opportunity to use the fine setting of these words by Purcell.

Thus, we can go through the whole of the Christian year and find that our services can become unified. The organist does not need the co-operation of the rector to do this much—he is fortunate if he has it—but he will be able to explain to the rector what he is trying to do, and the rector will undoubtedly fall in line, even though the first step should be the rector's. However, we do know that rectors cannot give thought to music in many cases; we know that they have many duties which call for varied activities; it is up to us to take the burden of music from their shoulders, and to do our part as faithfully as possible.

PROPERS

The Propers for the Mass are found in Part XII of the English Hymnal, page 854. There is a distinct set for each Sunday and Holy Day, including Introit, Gradual, Alleluia or Tract (Tract from Septuagesima to Easter); Sequence sometimes; Offertory and Communio. The proper Preface is found in the Prayer Book. The Introit is begun as soon as the celebrant approaches the Altar at the beginning of the service; the Gradual is begun as soon as the Epistle is ended; the Alleluia or Tract follows immediately upon the Gradual; the Sequence, when it occurs (and often a hymn is regularly used at this point), should be begun immediately the Alleluia-verse is finished. The Offertory is begun as soon as the celebrant begins to recite the Offertory at the Altar; the Communio is begun immediately after the conclusion of the Agnus Dei. The Propers of the Mass are set to plainchant, but the Proper melodies are very difficult and choirs in this country are not used to the idiom, therefore this work requires very careful preparation. At St. Mark's we use Psalm-tone settings by Francis Burgess, with judicious use of the Proper melodies for the Introits, according to our ability and looking to the gradual building-up of a repertoire of these Proper melodies.

ORDINARY OF THE MASS

The Ordinary of the Mass is sung to different settings; the words are invariable but the musical setting of these words has claimed the attention of many composers. There are three schools of composition: First, the ancient plainchant; second, the polyphonic; and third, modern harmonized music, which

may be subdivided into many different sections, such as Viennese and Continental, English Cathedral, modern orchestral, and modern Anglo-Catholic. Music of an impersonal nature, as distinct from that with romantic tendencies, is clearly more in keeping with liturgical use; Masses of the Continental and Viennese type throw the balance of the service out of proportion, they absorb the attention of the congregation by their prettinesses, they are usually full of repetitions, meaningless as far as the words are concerned, although musically fine; they are made chiefly in classic forms and the musical thought is paramount.

Plainchant is preferred from a liturgical standpoint, not only for its straightforwardness, but for its distinctly sacred flavor, as opposed to concertroom music; it is used in church exclusively, it is the church's music. Music of polyphonic type is a legitimate growth from plainsong, as the knowledge of music itself became more extensive, and the use of harmony was better understood; certain periods of the polyphonic school are full of excesses and vain repetitions, but if we refer to the Masses of Palestrina and Vittoria we will have a basis from which to judge other composers. The 19th century English compositions are on the whole distinctly sentimental and personal, tracing back to the period of the restoration of Charles II; very few have the boldness of purity, they were made for the taste of their time. The modern English school is more virile, sometimes distinctly rugged; the words are treated more directly, there are but few traces of Victorianism, and I am firmly of the opinion that a distinct and usable English style is being created which will tend more and more to the polyphonic type, and be much more acceptable for liturgical use. Masses of the Viennese and Continental type are often good music, moulded on classic forms; the text is not often seriously considered, Kyries and Dona Nobis Pacem trot along the gay lilts, the Incarnatus is usually saccharine. But we must remember they were not composed for strictly church use, the influence of the Ducal establishments with their wealth of singers and instrumentalists is upon them and was their incentive; they make full use of operatic and orchestral possibilities. Few of our choirs are able to render them efficiently, few of our organs are suitable substitutes for strings and woodwinds.

Masses by American composers are as yet rare. Dr. Noble's writings are fine, mostly in the English Cathedral tradition, Parker in E is a stand-by; and I have copies of Masses by Philip James, William Y. Webbe, Channing Lefebvre, etc. But as yet an American school has not arisen, and one cannot help but see these compositions as pioneer developments in a period. Within the past few months I have had copies of Masses by Everett Titcomb, the choirmaster of the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Boston, which are still in manu-

script. His work is direct, flavored with the modes and well written for voices without accompaniment. They are a distinct contribution to the music of our church, and we have them in rehearsal now. In the modern English school we think well of Healey Willan, William Lovelock, Charles Wood, Harold Drake, and Alan Gray, to speak of a few among many, and I examine each one that is published. There are many I would like to use, but Masses must be carefully selected, and only after months of personal trial, for it is a serious matter to add new music to the repertoire.

EVENSONG

There is a tremendous literature of evening canticles in the English Cathedral tradition; some of them are out-dated, although fine. I think the Walmisley in D-minor will always be worth while, and certainly the rendering of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in B-flat by Stanford, sung by the Westminster Abbey choir on an H.M.V. record, is an inspiration. However, if the Plainsong Psalter is used, nothing is better than plainsong for the canticles, with some faux-bourdon verses. We use settings by Healey Willan, Geoffrey Shaw, and Alec Rowley, as well as more ancient ones—de Zachariis (for male voices), Vittoria, Andreas, etc. These are not used exclusively, but are alternated with those of the English Cathedral school which are still in our repertoire.

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR COMMUNION

Hymn and Introit, sung as the celebrant approaches the Altar.
Kyrie Eleison—Lord have mercy upon us.
The Collect, sung by the celebrant at the Altar.
The Epistle, sung by the sub-deacon, facing the Altar.
Gradual, Alleluia (or Tract).
A hymn, bearing on the teachings of the Day.
The Gospel, sung by the deacon at the choir steps, accompanied by candles, the symbols that show Christ, the Light of the World.
The Creed—a hymn setting forth our beliefs.
Sermon.
Offertory—an Antiphon, followed by a congregational hymn or an anthem.
Prayer for Christ's Church.
Exhortation, Confession and Absolution.
Comfortable Words.
Suursum Corda and Preface.
Sanctus and Benedictus.
Prayer of Consecration.
The Lord's Prayer.
Prayer of Humble Access.
Agnus Dei.
Communion.
Prayer of Thanksgiving.
Gloria in Excelsis.
Post-Communion Collects (page 49 of the Prayer Book).
The Blessing.
Post-Communion Antiphon and the Last Gospel (St. John I).

HYMNS

Hymns were primarily used for two purposes—the praise and adoration of the Lord, and for instruction in dogma. We all know certain great teaching hymns, we have all learned from them (see No. 259, "Praise to the Holiest in the height"). The hymns used at a communion service may be: First, at the beginning of the service (as an Introit, formerly a Psalm was used at this place); second, at the Sequence (between the Epistle and Gospel), which should if possible have a direct bearing on the points of the Collect, Epistle and Gospel; third, at the Offertory; fourth, during Communion, or at the conclusion of the service (a hymn of thanksgiving). In Protestant hymnody the matter is more wholly subjective, the emphasis being on the individual's relation to his Master. Protestant hymnody of England and America derives largely from Lutheran Germany. Catholic hymnody on the other hand is wholly objective, stressing God's relation to His church and to the human family. These derive from the Latin Office Hymns in the Breviary and from the Sequences of the Mass. Frequently, such hymns will set forth the whole scheme of salvation, and end with an ascription of praise to the Trinity.

Protestant hymns are not altogether (or rarely) suitable for communion services; we gather at the Altar to receive the Sacrament—our preparation has been privately made—a necessary part of the service is worship and adoration. The Protestant comes to the Sacrament expressing his own unworthiness, the Catholic comes expressing God's abundant mercy and loving-kindness. The mystic element is well stressed in hymns suitable for singing at a Mass; we can foster that feeling by choice of hymns, we can help to take people from their every-day surroundings and set them down in a place apart for the worship of God. A hymn should rarely be chosen just because the congregation sing it well; they will sing any hymn well when they understand its purpose, and if it is used frequently enough to make them familiar with it.

ORGAN MUSIC

Organ music is used for preludes and postludes to services in most churches; again, just what may be considered suitable depends upon the purpose of his tasks. My own lists are somewhat severe, but I am fortunate in having a congregation which is thoroughly acquainted with the best of music in secular circles; they are quite ready to listen to Bach. Therefore, I am able to limit myself to strictly classical organ music, and use only the best. In the prelude, I generally improvise on the themes of the day—hymns, anthems, Ordinary of the Mass; otherwise, I use soft but colorful music, such as the Choral-preludes of Brahms, the Orgel-buchlein of Bach, slow movements from organ sonatas, and hymn-preludes when I can find one to fit the Introit hymn.

Postludes as a rule are more brilliant. Again I can use Bach's Preludes and Fugues regularly, also movements from sonatas and symphonies; sometimes I am able to use hymntunes, such as the setting of Picardy by Noble, depending entirely upon the make-up of the service list. The organ number practically succeeds the Gloria in Excelsis at Mass, therefore it depends upon the music used for the Ordinary of the Mass. During Advent and Lent quieter numbers are needed, for the Mass music ends with an Ave Verum or other suitable hymn in place of the Gloria, and the Mass does not end on such a triumphant note. Our Evening Office ends with the ringing of the Angelus, while certain prayers are recited privately; a soft number is almost imperative, otherwise it is necessary to build gradually into a vigorous beginning of the piece, or the bump of tone would be too severe and disturbing. Bach, Franck, Vierne, and Widor are my basis, and I entirely omit any music which may have secular associations in the minds of the congregation.

CHOIR

The choir at St. Mark's is composed of boys and men; twenty-six trebles, six altos, four tenors, and four basses, I find to be an adequate balance; rehearsals are held three times weekly for trebles alone, twice weekly for alto boys alone; one general rehearsal on Friday evenings, and twenty minutes in the choir-room before each service. This amount of work (seven hours weekly) enables us to maintain an interesting repertoire and to rehearse thoroughly, but from October first to June thirtieth there is no letting-down, we work consistently. No extra weekday services are sung by the full Choir; these are sung by two cantors, and usually plainsong Masses or unison settings by Willan, Piggott, etc., are used; similarly, in the summer months the cantors sing the Sunday Mass.

We are setting ourselves a high standard, it is worth while; we try to tell the congregation what we are aiming to do, so that they will come along with us. They are willing to hear the best music, they are used to it outside, and do not come to be entertained by the music, they are in the church to worship; the music is their part, deputized to the choir as a particular body representing them in the praise and adoration of the Lord. We are the people's representatives in our especial abilities.

PHILOSOPHIES

I have tried to sum up in this outline the aims which we have towards music in the church, and to show particularly the results which may be obtained by co-ordinating our abilities to our ideals. It is done in a moderate way, for our music budget is not excessive, and no singer can consider himself overpaid for the work required; but it is necessary to have their co-operation and understanding, as I

found in the first year of my work at St. Mark's.

We are again fortunate in having a beautiful Gothic building, which is never used as a recital or concert room. The purposes for which we are working are carried out even in the architecture and furnishings of the church, in the ceremonial which is an integral part of the services, by the sermons which have a distinct bearing on the teaching of the church, and finally, by the devotion of the congregation.

FINIS

BOOKS FOR REFERENCE

The Book of Common Prayer
The Hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church
The English Hymnal
The English Gradual (Part II)
Introits with Musick (G. H. Palmer)
A List of Hymns for Sundays and Holy Days (Gray)
The Plainsong Psalter (Gray)
A Selection of Grails, Alleluyas and Tracts (Convent of S. Mary, Wantage)
A Selected List of Anthems for the Seasons and Feasts of the Church Year (Gray)
A Repertoire of English Cathedral Music (Carl Fischer)

Reprinted from THE AMERICAN ORGANIST, New York, *February 1933.*